

**USAID Semiannual Report
UKRAINE
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SUMMARY

From January 1 through June 6, 2000, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) focused its work in Ukraine on strengthening the national and regional leadership of democratically oriented political parties and their factions in parliament, while assisting in the development of emerging coalitions among reformist parties. The Institute also continued to help its civic partner, the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, maintain its volunteer base and undertake effective advocacy and public education campaigns, while counseling it on means of expanding its donor base.

NDI's activities during this period correspond to USAID Strategic Objective 2.1: "Better-informed citizens' participation in political and economic decision making."

BACKGROUND

In the first half of 2000, Ukraine entered a new period of political uncertainty. Riding the wave of his recent re-election, President Leonid Kuchma, backed by a collection of citizens groups, initiated a national referendum to restructure the nation's parliament and further elevate the power of the presidency. Mr. Kuchma defended the referendum as a necessary tool for breaking the longstanding legislative-executive deadlock on economic reform policies. Voters approved the referendum measures on April 16 by large margins, though the voting was tainted by widespread violations. Following the vote, President Kuchma submitted 3 of the 4 ballot measures, in the form of draft constitutional amendments, to the parliament. If ratified by the parliament this autumn, the president will have new power to dissolve parliament. Passage would also restrict the legal immunity of legislators and reduce by one-third the size of the assembly. The fourth ballot measure, the creation of a bi-cameral parliament, has been referred to a special ad-hoc committee, which is expected to bring forward proposals for action this fall.

The constitutional referendum is the latest in a series of conflicts between the executive and legislative branches of the government. Since Ukraine's independence in 1991, its single-chamber parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, has grown ever more corrupt and uncontrollable. President Kuchma's success in the 2000 referendum threatens to weaken the legislative branch still further.

In January 2000, in a bid to forestall dissolution of the parliament, right-leaning factions in the Rada joined forces to form a majority bloc in support of President Kuchma's policy agenda. Critics contend that the coalition was formed, and has been maintained through coercive means, by a cabal of powerful parliamentary deputies loyal to the president. The coalition brought about a wholesale turnover in the leadership of the parliament in January, when it elected a new speaker and new committee chairs. These new leaders replaced a group of leftists generally hostile to reform. Many new committee leaders are now sympathetic to Western assistance organizations and have expressed a new openness to cooperation with NDI.

As reform-oriented political parties confronted an increasing number of difficulties during the first half of 2000, NDI responded by assisting these parties to strengthen their organizations at the national and local levels in preparation for the June 25 by-elections held in 10 constituencies. In response to the formation of a non-Communist majority in the Verkhovna Rada, the Institute sought opportunities to advise members of parliament on pending legislation. Within the civic sector, CVU continued to advocate for government accountability and transparency, conduct nationwide public education campaigns and help ordinary people understand and exercise their rights through its “public hours” program.

NDI’S PAST WORK IN UKRAINE

Since September 1992, NDI has conducted programs in Ukraine aimed at strengthening democratic political parties and helping them more effectively fulfill their role as a vehicle for public participation in government. NDI’s work with parties in recent years has emphasized basic skills training in party coordination, election management, public communications, and strengthening of regional networks.

NDI’s work with parties has resulted in a number of tangible successes. In 1996, politicians credited NDI’s work with regional multi-party coalitions as a factor in the ratification of Ukraine’s new constitution. As a result of NDI assistance, such reformist democratic parties as the two Rukh parties and Reforms & Order have established new internal mechanisms to enhance communication and broaden their popular appeal. Perhaps most significantly, at NDI’s urging, political parties have begun routinely to examine past electoral performance in planning future strategy.

Within the civic sector, NDI’s primary accomplishment has been its support for the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU). With NDI’s assistance, CVU recruited and trained thousands of citizens to participate as nonpartisan observers in the 1994, 1998 and 1999 election cycles, developed a wide range of civic and voter education programs, and gained increasing visibility and credibility nationwide. CVU’s membership, structure and program exemplify a high standard of democratic participation, organization and management. NDI has begun working with CVU to expand its programs and diversify its funding base.

In its more limited efforts with other civic groups in Ukraine, NDI has worked with a broad range of community-based and issue-oriented organizations to help them apply new techniques in mobilizing their members to demand government accountability and engage in political life. Most recently, with funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, NDI has administered a two-year program that provides small seed grants to Ukrainian civic organizations in support of citizen activism.

Since 1994, NDI’s parliamentary programs have helped lawmakers and their factions coordinate activities, communicate more regularly with constituents, and work constructively with the media. While gaining access to the parliament in recent years has been difficult because of its conservative and anti-Western leadership, NDI has held consultations with reform-oriented faction leaders and independent deputies. Through its strong ties to political parties, NDI gained access to the parties’ affiliated factions and organized faction-strengthening seminars. NDI has also advised parliamentary leaders on drafting the assembly’s new rules of procedure.

From the outset of its work in Ukraine, NDI has supported the country’s local reformers. Seminars in several major cities have engaged local government officials, civic activists, and political parties in developing cooperative solutions to local problems. Training for local elected officials has focused on constituency outreach, communication with the media, and regularized citizen participation in the policy-making process.

NDI has continued to work with both national and regional party organizations throughout Ukraine. The International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked in tandem with NDI for several years in Ukraine. The two institutes have established a division of labor by mutual agreement along geographic lines. NDI has worked primarily in Kyiv and the Poltava, Kherson, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnytsia, Lviv, and Uzhhorod regions.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

I. Political Party Development

Between January and June 2000, in preparation for the June by-elections, NDI conducted political party training with two developing party coalitions and the political parties within these coalitions. The training was aimed at building the skills of regional party activists supporting efforts to build party coalitions, and improving parties' capacity to organize for elections.

Rukh-Udoenko, Reforms & Order, and the **Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists** signed a formal cooperation agreement in late 1999 and have worked closely together in parliament and during elections. Rukh-Udoenko is one of two successor parties to the former Rukh party, with which NDI cooperated from its earliest programs in Ukraine. Reforms & Order, a newer party, had representatives elected to the Rada for the first time in March 1998, and have joined with the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists into the Reforms-Congress faction. All three parties jointly supported Hennady Udoenko for the presidency in 1999 and, as this programming period ended, were cooperating in preparing several candidates for parliamentary by-elections to be held on June 25. The parties have voiced their intention to eventually unify into a single organization.

Rukh-Kostenko, the second successor party to Rukh, gained official recognition as an independent party in early 2000 and has joined a loose alliance with **Batkivshchina**, the party of Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. During the first half of 2000, cooperation between these parties was limited to mutual support in parliament, rather than cooperation in voter outreach or election preparation. NDI has not incorporated Batkivshchina into formal training activities with Rukh-Kostenko.

In recent years, NDI has carried out limited programming with the **People's Democratic Party (PDP)**, which until late 1999 was known as the "party of power" for its close ties to government leaders. The party has since lost most of its former influence in the political arena, and most of its former faction members in parliament have changed their affiliation to other parties. The remaining organization lacks much of the democratic quality that formerly made it a promising candidate for NDI training. The Institute continued to follow developments within PDP and meet periodically with its leaders, but conducted no training for the party in the first half of 2000.

For some time, NDI has sought to identify an appropriate center-left Ukrainian party for training activities. During the first half of 2000, the Institute opened talks with the **Socialist Party of Ukraine**, led by Oleksandr Moroz, and the **Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine**, led by Yuri Buzduhan. The two parties, which have announced their own center-left coalition, invited NDI to conduct an assessment of training needs with a view toward possible cooperation.

Objectives

NDI political party programming seeks to:

- Strengthen reform-oriented, democratic political parties at both the national and regional levels.
- Improve party activists' skills in the use of public polling information, campaign coordination, party organization, and media relations;
- Improve the organizing, constituent outreach, and media skills of local party-based elected officials and local party organizations; and
- Encourage reform-oriented, democratic political parties to forge alliances with like-minded parties.

All NDI's political party development activities correspond to USAID Strategic Objective 2.1: "Better-informed citizens' participation in political and economic decision-making," and to Intermediate Results 2.1.1: "Increased confidence in the political process," 2.1.1.2: "Citizenry and NGOs influence the political process," and 2.1.1.3.1: "Informed electorate."

Activities

- Between March 17 and April 3, NDI conducted a series of five election-training seminars in Kyiv, Lviv, Rivne, and Zaporizhzhia. The seminars were organized for national-, regional-, and local-level party activists of the developing coalition of Rukh-Udovenko, Reforms & Order, and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. Nearly 300 party activists, representing all regions of the country, participated in these training sessions. Polish trainers Marcin Walecki and Tomasc Lenc from the Warsaw-based European Institute for Democracy led the sessions. The programs trained the parties in practical skills to coordinate preparations for general parliamentary elections in 2002. The initial seminar, in Kyiv, engaged national party leaders in discussions of countrywide cooperation. The remaining sessions worked primarily with local and regional organizers in cities that will be strategically important in future elections. The basic program agenda was standardized throughout the seminar series, with minor variations based on the particular training needs in different cities. Topics included the development of a political message, voter contact, use of opinion polls in campaigns, political advertising, campaign fundraising techniques, organization of a campaign headquarters and staff, and coordinating the activities of parties in a coalition during campaigns.
- On April 14-15, NDI conducted a two-day seminar for Rukh-Kostenko that focused on training 53 party press secretaries for relations with the media. The seminar was led by former NDI Kyiv party trainer and country director Jacques Monasch, together with current representative Tom Cormier and program assistant Katya Ryabiko. NDI has built close relations with Rukh-Kostenko's regional branch in Kirovohrad through several training programs, most recently conducted in autumn 1999. This seminar complemented previous training activities that focused on strengthening the management and membership of the regional branch. The training included active workshops in which participants drafted their own press releases and staged mock press conferences, as well as strategy sessions where participants reviewed their progress in building a communications function in the party branch.

Evaluation

This evaluation, following indicators outlined in the workplan for this six-month period, is based on recent interviews with NDI program participants and observations by NDI program staff.

How have parties intensified their activity in the regions? To what extent has party affiliation increased in the regions and among local council deputies?

NDI party-building programming has emphasized the value of regional outreach in expanding a party's sphere of political influence, and has encouraged greater investment by democratic parties in strengthening their regional representation. Training has included a range of membership recruitment and cultivation techniques, which parties have used to attract new members and volunteers. A measurable increase in party activity and membership in the regions as a result of these techniques would indicate success in this area.

- Rukh-Kostenko, as a newly registered independent party, solidified its infrastructure across the regions in the first half of 2000 by re-registering all regional offices with the authorities. The organization in Lviv moved into new facilities. All regional organizations acquired new computers, which have been used to regularize e-mail communications among the branches and with the party central office in Kyiv. E-mail communication between regional offices and the central office increased, particularly following the NDI communication seminar in April, which focused on electronic correspondence as a means of coordination. Membership growth has been more difficult to track, because the party was unable to record the number of members who maintained allegiance to Yuri Kostenko following his split from the original Rukh party in 1999. As of the beginning of August 2000, membership stands at 27,000.
- Press Secretary Oksana Lasiychuk of Rukh-Kostenko's youth wing, *Molodiy Rukh*, reported that the group organized public demonstrations in early 2000 to protest the cancellation of student subsidies for public transport. These demonstrations, which contributed to preserving the subsidies, raised the public profile of Molodiy Rukh and helped to attract new volunteers and members. The organization also actively supported candidates in the parliamentary by-elections in June, using communication and media-outreach techniques imparted in NDI seminars.
- Rukh-Udoenko opened a new regional branch in the Cherkasy region in early 2000. The party also took advantage of the June by-elections to intensify its work in the Lviv and Zaporizhzhia regions, opening new connections with media organizations and allowing the party to recruit new volunteers and supporters, whom the party hopes to continue to cultivate in the coming years.
- Rukh-Udoenko has gained affiliates among local council members at the expense of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In the Lviv City Council, of approximately 100 members, the Rukh-Udoenko faction grew in early 2000 from 12 members to 25, largely as a result of PDP members leaving their own party to join Rukh-Udoenko. Rukh-Udoenko, recognizing the importance of developing leaders and alliances on the local level, has requested that NDI provide expanded training on local-level election preparation and faction-building for members of regional party branches.

- Both Rukh-Udoenko and Reforms & Order have used their parliamentary deputies as a resource for party-building and election support. All deputies affiliated with these parties are assigned to specific regions, where they have worked in the first half of the year with party-affiliated local deputies on legislative issues and helped to train the staff of local and regional party headquarters. In preparing for the June by-elections, parliamentary deputies produced and distributed leaflets on behalf of their parties, proclaiming their support for particular candidates.
- Reforms & Order and Rukh-Udoenko cultivated regional interest groups during the first half of the year as a means of bolstering their support in specific regions. In Crimea, the parties organized public roundtable discussions on the issue of citizenship and land ownership for ethnic Tatars who have been recently repatriated to Ukraine. The discussions focused on ways of distributing land more equitably among residents. As a result of this targeted activity, both parties have received increased support from Crimean Tatar voters.

In cases where separate parties have pursued a policy of consolidation or coalition building, how and to what extent have the parties successfully coordinated campaign strategy and activity on the national level? On the regional level?

NDI has helped parties cooperate through regular communication to advance common policy goals, or, in the case of evolving coalitions, to establish joint structures for communicating with the public or managing elections.

- Reforms & Order, Rukh-Udoenko, and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists successfully cooperated in elections on the national and regional levels during the June by-elections. On the national level, the three parties identified common candidates to support in key election districts and established joint campaign headquarters in those regions. Typically in these cases, campaign managers from Reforms & Order coordinated the campaigns of Rukh-affiliated candidates. In Lviv, the cooperation resulted in the election of Taras Chornovil to fill a vacant parliamentary seat. In Kyiv, the parties successfully brought about the election of Ivan Saliy. The parties cooperated in Zaporizhzhia as well, though their chosen candidate came in third in the voting.
- While cooperation between Rukh-Kostenko and Batkivshchina was successful in coordinating votes on major issues between the two parties' parliamentary factions, the two groups were less successful in coordinating party activity, particularly in elections. While the national leadership of the two parties agreed to support common candidates in the June 25 parliamentary by-elections, regional organizations of the parties disagreed at times, even diverging from the policies of their own national leadership. In the Dnipropetrovsk region, national leaders of the Rukh-Batkivshchina bloc agreed to support independent candidate Serhiy Tyhypko to fill a vacant seat in parliament. Local Rukh officials in Dnipropetrovsk protested the decision and actively campaigned for Tyhypko's opponent. This breakdown in discipline undermined the cooperation that had been achieved on the national level and pointed to a need for further training in strategic planning and systems of decision-making for this partnership.

How are party-based local deputies relating to and communicating with their constituents to inform them about their activities and respond to their requests?

- Both Rukh-Kostenko and Reforms & Order now communicate with the public on a regular basis by means of public announcements on issues of concern to the party. Announcements are delivered in

press conferences and often published as commentary in regional and local newspapers. Both parties, however, report that access to the press continues to be limited by competing political interests that control media outlets. In the first half of 2000, NDI worked to support the parties' skills in media communication through seminars that developed the parties' press strategy and honed their skills in writing press releases and staging press conferences.

- To supplement their media outreach, the parties have approached constituents more directly, through personal appearances and meetings in public places. In the first half of 2000, in the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Volyn regions, Reforms & Order initiated cultural events, organized competitions in schools, and began meeting with parents of students in regional schools. Regional party organizations of Rukh-Kostenko and Rukh-Udovenko have also organized public events on the regional level that have allowed their affiliated parliamentary deputies a forum to discuss current political issues. More intimate events have included meetings with groups of care providers in hospitals.
- In addition to public meetings and cultural events, Rukh-Kostenko and Reforms & Order have instituted regular office hours at regional offices where the public may meet with party officials and receive information about the party's activities and positions.
- Both Rukh-Kostenko and Rukh-Udovenko now receive direct requests for information from voters on government affairs, which by law require a written response within two weeks. Party staff forward these requests to deputies, who in turn pose the questions to relevant government officials and monitor any follow up that may be required. Party staff members then draft responses to constituents.

Have parties used information on voters' priorities and concerns to craft campaign platforms and public relations material? To what extent?

- In Dnipropetrovsk, the regional branch of Rukh-Kostenko used its knowledge of local voter sentiment to craft its election strategy and choice of candidates during preparations for the June 2000 parliamentary by-elections. The leading candidate, Serhiy Tyhypko, held a strong position due to the support of the regional governor and his position as a successful businessman. However, local Rukh-Kostenko officials built their election strategy around the significant portion of the public who viewed Tyhypko as a corrupt oligarch, and the party instead supported mining union leader Mykhailo Volynets in the election.
- In Zhitomyr, Rukh-Kostenko reported that it had capitalized on voter dissatisfaction with former deputy Yuri Yekhanurov, who had not maintained close contact with constituents. Rukh leaders, in nominating the head of their regional organization for the election, organized their campaign around the theme "Choose One of Your Own," in reference to their candidate's close ties to the local community.
- Reforms & Order, in preparing its strategy for contesting the June by-elections, took heed of public opinion polls that criticized rampant splits among political parties. To address this concern among voters, the party emphasized party unity in its campaign materials. In campaigning on behalf of Taras Chornovil in Lviv, Reforms & Order emphasized the candidate's local origins and his late father's leadership of the united Rukh party. In Ternopil, the party addressed public concerns about widespread corruption and built a campaign around the promise to root out public corruption.

II. Civic Organizing Development

Committee of Voters of Ukraine

CVU undertook three major programs during these six months: creation of a nationwide network of drop-in centers to help citizens work with local government, an advocacy campaign for election law reform, and monitoring of local elections and parliamentary by-elections. CVU also conducted limited monitoring around the April 16 constitutional referendum, which was mostly focused on access to the media and early voting. CVU continued to increase its network of activists through expansion of its local level public education programs to many rayon centers. In addition to these nationwide programs, many local CVU branches held general “town hall” meetings at which citizens could talk to deputies about a variety of issues. The national office continued to monitor debate and votes in the Verkhovna Rada and disseminate information through its Web site, newspaper, and regional offices.

NDI’s civic programming activities correspond to USAID Strategic Objective 2.1: “Better-informed citizens’ participation in political and economic decision making,” and to Intermediate Result 2.1.1: “Increased confidence in the political process” and Intermediate Result 2.1.2: “More unbiased public information available to citizens.”

Objectives

- CVU will organize national advocacy campaigns, which include a media plan and grassroots participation by all regions.
- CVU’s “public hours” program, the vehicle for its work with local government, will be operating in at least 20 regions.
- CVU will learn long-term planning processes and a greater variety of fundraising techniques

Activities

Advocacy campaigns

- In this period CVU has laid the groundwork for a drive to create a single unified Election Code for presidential, parliamentary and local elections. The Code would provide for domestic monitors and address deficiencies in the current law that hamper attempts to prevent or punish fraud. CVU branches in every oblast and Kyiv held a total of 62 roundtables with representatives of political parties and civic groups to explain the issue, take suggestions on the content of the law, and solicit a collective public statement of support for election law reform.
- CVU formed a “working group” on election law reform that includes civic groups, scholars, members of the secretariat of the Central Election Commission Ivano Shaporenko and Ruslan Knyozevych, and CEC staff members Marina Stavniychuk and Victor Alsufyev. Freedom House recently agreed to fund meetings of the group to discuss and draft an Election Code.
- Partly because of turmoil in the Verkhovna Rada this spring, CVU decided not to pursue its other proposed national advocacy campaign: introducing legislation to require recorded voting as a parliamentary rule. In January, however, CVU branches in seven oblasts met with local council members about publicizing local council votes. In Ivano-Frankivsk the city council agreed to

publish major votes. Luhansk and Chernivtsi deputies agreed to put this issue to a vote at future city council meetings, and Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk deputies promised their support for future legislation.

- In February, CVU began a campaign to persuade national deputies to report on their records. CVU publicized its “Deputy Equator” project as marking the halfway point in legislators’ terms in the current Rada. It asked that all visitors to its “Public Hours” (see description below) send letters asking deputies to report on what they had accomplished since 1998. To facilitate this, CVU provided the stationary and envelopes, to a total of about 10,000 letter-writers. Several CVU branches also sent questionnaires to deputies on behalf of CVU itself.

Local Government

- During this period CVU opened Public Hours in 40 oblast or rayon centers covering every oblast of Ukraine. Under this program, CVU invites the public to its offices or other donated space to consult with experienced CVU activists on how to solve problems with government. A total of 30,000 people have visited Public Hours since January. Most have questions about access to government services and subsidies, privatization and agricultural reform and non-payment of wages. In Odessa, Zhitomir and Dnipropetrovsk, CVU is specializing in questions on land reform. In Rivne and Luhansk they have opened additional satellite public hours offices at universities to respond to student complaints about requests for bribes.
- CVU advises people on where to turn for assistance, counsels them on their rights to answers and accountability within certain time periods, helps them write letters, and sometimes accompanies them to court. CVU also uses its own contacts with deputies and executive branch agencies, which in many cases have been strengthened through Public Hours. In some oblasts (Zaporizhzhia, Ternopil, Sumy, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk, Cherkassy, Mykolayiv, Zhitomir, and Luhansk), CVU has a permanent arrangement with volunteer lawyers or law students to be present at public hours.
- CVU uses Public Hours to recruit election monitors, educate the public, and promote government accountability. Materials available to the public include CVU’s own brochures on how to work with government and directories of information about local and national officials. CVU also distributes publications by other non-partisan civic groups describing how government institutions work, including publications by USAID-supported groups such as the Counterpart Creative Center and Institute for Civil Society. CVU has distributed 45,000 copies of various booklets and brochures in this period.
- All CVU branches keep records of the complaints brought to Public Hours. Some have begun to organize small groups to advocate for policy changes to solve the most common complaints, including transport fare increases and decreases in subsidies for heating in a building complex. All Public Hours projects asked visitors to request an accounting from deputies, as described above. Also in this period, CVU used Public Hours to collect information on how well citizens thought President Kuchma was fulfilling his campaign promises.

Election Monitoring

- CVU monitored local elections in the cities of Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnytsia, Mykolayiv, Zhitomyr and Rivne, as well as the towns of Dubno and Korets in the Rivne oblast, Makiyivska and

Yenakiyevo (Donetsk oblast), Priluky and Bakhmach (Chernihiv oblast), Kremenchuk (Poltava oblast), Vasylkiv (Kyiv oblast.), Smila (Cherkasy oblast), and several other villages. It also monitored the June 25 parliamentary by-elections in 10 parliamentary districts. In nearly all local elections, CVU covered every polling place. Eight hundred monitors took part in the June parliamentary elections. CVU recently won a lower court ruling, which charged that police exceeded their authority in detaining and arresting CVU monitors on their way to elections in Vasylkiv.

- In these contests, CVU used many of the methods it has tested in previous national elections. In the parliamentary elections and in the Dnipropetrovsk mayoral elections CVU, in collaboration with Internews, produced and ran public service announcements urging people to vote. In Rivne, Dubno, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolayiv and parliamentary by-elections in Lviv, CVU undertook a parallel vote tabulation (PVT) using methods learned through collaboration with NDI on a PVT in the autumn 1999 presidential election. CVU's "press centers," extended press conferences, and meeting places for journalists on Election Day helped the Committee distribute information widely in Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolayiv and Zaporizhzhia. In all regions, CVU continued to use mobile monitoring groups that could be summoned when a political party monitor, voter or election official reported a problem to CVU headquarters.
- For the April 16 referendum, CVU focused efforts during the pre-election period, monitoring coverage in local mass media, levels of pre-election day voting, and formation of local election commissions. On April 16, approximately 1,000 CVU monitors in mobile groups mainly checked turnout levels at different times during the day. CVU held a press conference at which it reported on biased media coverage, unusually large numbers of early voters, and instances of voter fraud with the collusion of local election commissioners. In May, CVU also issued its comprehensive final report on monitoring the presidential elections.

Organizational Development

- In this period, NDI civic trainer Joanne Pugh provided individual fundraising consultations to CVU branches in Kyiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, Luhansk, Mariupol, Poltava, and Rivne. In her weekly meetings and daily phone calls with the CVU central office, Ms. Pugh helped CVU staff compose plans, including timelines for the election law advocacy campaign and for developing CVU's capacity for working at the local level. This included introducing two new major local government programs: Public Hours, which CVU initiated in the first half of 2000; and work with community boards, which CVU will pilot in four cities in the second half of the year.
- This year, for the first time, NDI gave CVU's Board of Directors a small sum of money, out of which it could make "seed grants" to local branches to test new ideas or election-related activities, subject to ultimate NDI approval. This helped local branches to justify any new initiatives as important to the long-term mission of the organization, and gave them practice in writing proposals. It generated lively discussion on the Board about the organization's priorities and mission and gave Board members practice in balancing competing priorities.

Civic Advocacy

Objective

Help leaders of civic organizations improve their fundraising operations, financial and program planning skills, and organizational management.

Activities

- NDI civic trainer Joanne Pugh consulted in large and small group settings with approximately 30 civic groups besides CVU in Kyiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, Luhansk, Mariupol, Poltava, and Rivne. Many others visited the NDI office or called to learn what services NDI had to offer. Ms. Pugh also spoke on fundraising to 50 civic group representatives at a Kharkiv seminar organized by the Ukrainian NGO Civic Initiatives.
- In consultations, Ms. Pugh advised civic groups first on clarifying their missions and program ideas, and second, on searching for funds. With the assistance of volunteer Roger Pugh, she is developing a database of information on foreign funding sources and on methods of raising money from Ukrainian sources that have proven successful. She has also used consultations to identify a smaller group of civic groups with which NDI can work more intensively on fundraising, planning programs, and advocacy.

Evaluation

In its national advocacy campaigns, how did CVU improve upon its 1999 drive to amend the presidential election law? How effectively did it plan, how extensively did it use the media, its branches and coalitions of other civic groups?

CVU failed to convince legislators to add a domestic monitoring provision to the presidential election law in part because of poor planning. By the time CVU was actively advocating, the presidential campaign was well underway, and CVU's task was complicated by candidates who were suspected of creating monitoring groups that they could control. In seeking a revised Election Code, CVU has begun a discussion of the issues before any election has been called.

In order to build a consensus among political leaders around the need for reform, CVU has held roundtables with political party and civic leaders in all oblasts and formed a working group comprised of those involved in drafting the new election-law. CVU is also seeking the broadest possible support for election law reform. By systematically asking for opinions on the content of a unified Code at roundtables, CVU has sought to engage and involve people in the issue. CVU is also soliciting statements of support from political party representatives, because it learned in 1999 that it was often more effective to target these leaders than individual deputies.

CVU has waged a media campaign for election law reform. Local television in Zaporizhzhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Kyiv and Cherkasy showed these roundtables, while nearly all got at least mention in print media. CVU staff have discussed the need for election law reform at ten press conferences in Kyiv, and all CVU leaders have been instructed to include mention of the issue in every public address or press interview they give.

How has CVU's Public Hours program contributed to making local government more accessible to citizens and local government deputies more accountable? How are these programs perceived by citizens and local government?

CVU estimates that approximately 30,000 people have come to CVU for help in getting services, or answers from government officials. While CVU cannot accurately compare rates of successful complaint resolution for people who do and do not seek CVU's help, a typical anecdotal report comes from Dokuchayevsky, Donetsk oblast. On CVU's advice, an elderly woman wrote to the local pension administration about an improperly calculated pension, adding that if she did not get a response, she planned to contact her Verkhovna Rada deputy, whom she named. The pension administration solved the problem in two hours and asked the woman not to write to her deputy.

In addition to solving individual problems, CVU has used Public Hours to change policies to make government more honest, accountable and open. For example:

- In Trostyanets, Sumy oblast, after CVU helped several people complain about bribes demanded by auto inspectors, an investigation was launched, and the head of the rayon auto inspection department was fired.
- In Bila Tserkva, Kyiv oblast, CVU has organized a group of Public Hours clients to meet regularly with deputies to discuss items on the city council's agenda.
- In Ivano-Frankivsk, CVU has entered into an agreement with a group of city council deputies to come regularly to Public Hours and answer questions. In Ternopil, a representative of the city department responsible for most subsidies has agreed to come once a week.
- In Konotop, Sumy oblast, CVU spearheaded a successful letter-writing campaign to keep the city council from awarding one firm the exclusive right to run public transport in the city, a move that would have driven up fares.

The Public Hours program has been well received by citizens as well as government, many of whom have written letters of thanks to CVU. In addition to the examples of cooperation with local government mentioned above, CVU often refers clients to Verkhovna Rada deputies' office hours, thus strengthening the institution of parliament as well.

How has CVU improved its long-term program of financial planning? Has it raised more from Ukrainian donors than in 1999? Has it tried new fundraising methods?

In April 1999, when CVU decided to turn to major donors other than NDI, it did not prioritize its expenses and did not apply to donors quickly enough. This led to delays in receiving funds to cover costs in fall and winter 1999. During that year, USAID's allocation of additional funds for election-related activities prevented more serious financing difficulties. By early summer 2000, in contrast, CVU had given NDI a plan for seeking funding from several sources to cover anticipated increased costs in 2001. Although not as detailed or realistic as it might have been, it was an improvement over 1999. By planning further in advance, CVU has also been able to identify means of attracting donors to its existing or planned programs, rather than being forced to choose programs based on available funds.

In expanding the Public Hours program, CVU has been able to leverage NDI funding to make maximum use of the kind of support Ukrainians can offer. Public Hours, which has become CVU's largest program, is conducted in donated or shared office space in about half of its locations. Lawyers, law students, local government officials and university professors have contributed their time. Although CVU prints its own materials to distribute at Public Hours, it also provides a distribution outlet for materials of other civic groups. Many local media outlets have publicized this popular program.

New fundraising approaches include more innovative approaches to soliciting in-kind donations. In 2000, CVU has tried to persuade universities to give course credit to law students who staff Public Hours in Zaporizhzhia. CVU also asked local merchants to contribute items that CVU can auction at its events (Ivano-Frankivsk). The Kyiv office opened a new Web site in 2000 with \$790 worth of services contributed by IP Telecom. CVU still needs to expand its repertoire of fundraising techniques, as it remains too dependent on Western donors, especially NDI.

How have other civic groups that NDI has trained improved their fundraising, planning or internal management?

Several of NDI's long-time civic contacts received support in 2000 from Ukrainian private, business or government sources for programs formerly funded by NDI though the Mott Foundation seed grant program or other Western donors. A few examples:

- The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (Dnipropetrovsk) secured local donors for its newsletter.
- A Poltava human rights group received various goods and services from local business worth about \$300.
- The Association of Servicemen's Shareholder Rights Center (Kharkiv) secured the use of an office and access to a computer, contributed by other NGOs.
- The Kherson Fund for Charity and Health has made an arrangement with the city government for free office space in return for assuming a part of the caseload of an overworked, understaffed Public Hours-type office in the city government.

Other NGOs, often with NDI's assistance, have won grants from Western donors. These include the Poltava Veterans' Union's human rights project, an environmental defense group in Mariupol, and ASSA in Kharkiv, a provider of job training and legal services on employment issues.

III. Parliamentary Development

With a major shift in the leadership of the Ukrainian parliament, NDI's parliamentary development program faced both new uncertainty and new opportunity in the first half of 2000. Having been largely barred from access to most parliamentary activity by the earlier leftist leadership, the new center-right leadership, which includes members of NDI's political party counterparts, has begun to welcome NDI assistance. While NDI was unable to organize formal training seminars in the first half of 2000, due to continuing uncertainty surrounding the national referendum and continuing changes in leadership, the Institute actively pursued opportunities to advise members of Rada committees on pending legislation,

including the reform of the parliament's rules of procedure. In coming months, NDI plans to contribute to further discussions on this topic.

Besides its direct cooperation with members of parliament, NDI has opened discussions with other groups supporting the parliament. Among these is the Laboratory for Legal Initiatives, a group of legislative staff members working to support the development of needed legislation through discussion and drafting.

Objectives

- Improve the mechanisms by which democratically oriented factions coordinate their activities and guide draft legislation through the parliamentary process, and help factions develop more effective means of involving constituent input into the drafting of legislative agendas and laws.
- Assist reform-oriented committee chairs and other influential members of committees in introducing and promoting reformist legislation.
- Encourage and assist reform-oriented committee chairs in holding open hearings on legislation, allowing for input not only from experts, but also from members of the public who will be affected by the legislation.

All NDI activities with Parliament correspond to USAID Strategic Objective 2.1: "Better-informed citizens' participation in political and economic decision-making" and to Intermediate Results 2.1.1: "Increased confidence in the political process," 2.1.2: "More unbiased public information available to citizens," 2.1.2.1: "Greater transparency in government decision-making," and to SO 2.2: "Legal Systems that Better Support Democratic Processes and Market Reforms" and IR 2.2.2.1: "Improved legislative drafting process."

Activities

On May 11, NDI cooperated with the International Republican Institute and the Parliamentary Development Project of Indiana University to present a semi-public forum on proposed changes to the Ukrainian parliament's rules of procedure. Participants included representatives of NGOs active in Ukraine, as well as several Ukrainian legislators and international experts on parliamentary procedure. NDI solicited the opinion of the deputy speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, Peter Milliken, on two drafts of a new law on parliamentary procedure. Mr. Milliken contributed a written opinion, which was circulated to the committee responsible for developing the law.

Evaluation

In the first six months of 2000, because of upheavals in the parliament, NDI was not able to conduct the activities planned for this period and on which the indicators are based. However, NDI observed progress toward the objectives set, based on training conducted in previous periods.

This evaluation, following indicators outlined in the workplan for this six-month period, reflects feedback from NDI program participants and observations by NDI program staff.

What measures have faction staffs taken to support their deputies' constituency contact?

Leaders of the Rukh-Kostenko, Rukh-Udovenko, and Reforms-Congress factions report that faction staff have recently instituted several key processes that enable faction members to maintain contact with constituents on a regular basis. First, all faction members, including those elected from the party list, are assigned to specific regions, in which they are responsible for managing local and regional contacts. Deputies are required to cooperate with their affiliated party's regional branch in their assigned regions to organize political events, which the parliamentarians attend when possible. Faction staff, in cooperation with the party staff, field questions and requests from constituents, which are sent to the deputies' offices by mail. Staff members draft responses and keep deputies informed about issues of particular consequence for constituents. Drawing on previous NDI training sessions, in early 2000, staff members of the Reforms-Congress and Rukh-Udovenko factions began training assistants of their deputies on these procedures.

- In one instance in the first half of 2000, a pro-presidential faction in the Verkhovna Rada introduced a draft law that would have required the installation of cash registers at all open markets and bazaars. Private entrepreneurs strongly opposed the measure on the grounds that it would allow for the levying of large taxes and fees from market vendors, as well as potential abuses by tax inspectors. Independent business associations staged demonstrations on the issue and wrote letters of protest to parliamentary deputies affiliated with the Rukh-Kostenko, Rukh-Udovenko, and Reforms-Congress factions. In response, the three factions voted against the law, which was defeated in parliament.
- Early in 2000, pessimistic forecasts on sugar beet production led to fears of widespread layoffs at sugar production plants, as Ukrainian law prohibits the import of raw materials – Cuban sugar cane or Russian beets – that could compensate for the shortfall in domestic raw material supply. Directors of sugar plants and unions of plant workers wrote to deputies from Rukh-Kostenko, Reforms-Congress, and Batkivshchina urging legislation that would temporarily lift import restrictions and thereby prevent layoffs. With the support of the three factions, the proposed measure passed.

How do factions communicate their party's parliamentary activity to the press and the public?

- In past programs, NDI has stressed the need for transparency in national policy making. The **Rukh-Kostenko** faction has responded by publicizing its voting records through its press office, Rukh-*Inform*, which in turn distributes the information among all regional Rukh-Kostenko party organizations. In addition, the Rukh party newsletter publishes voting records for all factions in the parliament, as well as answers to constituents' questions concerning the work of the faction. The faction's press secretary prepares press releases for the mass media and composes articles detailing the position of the faction on various issues. In cases where the faction is sponsoring legislation being deliberated by a parliamentary committee, the faction periodically releases transcripts of interviews with committee heads, which discuss the issues involved in the legislation.
- The bloc that includes the Rukh-Udovenko and Reforms-Congress factions distributes daily press releases on important parliamentary issues and pending bills during Rada sessions. In addition, the factions' press services compose articles and commentary for distribution to the media. In particular, the press service reacts through press conferences or news releases to inaccurate information from competing factions or media organizations, which may misrepresent the voting record of the Rukh or Reforms-Congress factions. The factions also arrange regional visits for their deputies to contact constituents or speak to regional press on issues affecting specific areas of the country.

What measures have factions taken to strengthen coordination with other factions within a developing coalition?

Both of the new parliamentary coalitions that have cooperated with NDI have improved their internal coordination and discipline in the first half of 2000. The Reforms-Congress and Rukh-Udovenko factions meet together each day to coordinate strategy and discuss pending issues. On matters of the federal budget and support of the Cabinet of Ministers, the factions have developed strong discipline and have improved their coordination during the six-month period. Rukh-Kostenko and Batkivshchina (which have not engaged in joint programming with NDI) have met in weekly coordination sessions, but the meetings include only MPs in the factions, rather than faction staff.

Besides coordination with their partner factions, each of the above-mentioned factions is a member of the majority coalition that formed in January 2000 following President Kuchma's announcement of the constitutional referendum. The coalition has continued to coordinate its activity and vote as a bloc, particularly on issues related to Mr. Kuchma's policy priorities. The member factions work within their own coalitions at the same time that they work with the parliamentary majority. The majority convenes weekly meetings of its coordinating committee to discuss and set policy. The member factions have practiced compromise in their mutual dealings, as when Yuri Kostenko voluntarily withdrew his candidacy for Deputy Speaker of the Rada in February 2000, yielding to the objections of the Rukh-Udovenko faction that threatened to split the majority.

To what extent have legislative committees involved the public interest and input from outside parties in the drafting and approval of new legislation?

Before 2000, conservative bureaucratic staffers blocked access to, and public information about, committee proceedings. The dramatic shift in parliamentary leadership in early 2000 brought new members into key Rada committees. Several committees, whose members now include deputies who have received training from NDI and other international NGOs, have since opened their doors to cooperation with outside advisory organizations. While the future of the Rada remains uncertain in the light of proposed constitutional amendments on the structure of the legislature, NDI will continue to meet with Rada committee members where appropriate and offer outside input on pending legislation.

- On May 11, the Rada's ad-hoc committee on rules of procedure convened a semi-public roundtable discussion, including expert international observers from NDI, IRI, and Indiana University's Parliamentary Development Project, to discuss provisions of a new proposal on parliamentary rules. Among the issues discussed were proposals to adopt the parliament's rules of procedure as a law. Several discussants argued that the rules should serve as standing orders enforced internally by the parliament so as to preserve the assembly's autonomy and prevent interference by the courts. This opinion was echoed in a letter that NDI requested from Peter Milliken, deputy speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, which NDI provided to the committee for discussion. Subsequently, the committee dismissed the proposal to pass the rules into law.
- In late spring 2000, the parliament organized an open hearing on the situation in the energy sector, to which the Cabinet of Ministers was invited. The purpose of the hearing was to receive testimony from experts on the cabinet's proposal for reforms to the energy sector. According to reports from NDI's counterparts in the parliament, as many as 40 deputies' votes were swayed by arguments presented in the hearing, and the Rada voted in favor of the proposed reforms.

- The Rada Committee on Education and Science, chaired by Rukh-Kostenko deputy Yukhnovsky (a participant in NDI seminars), held a semi-public hearing in the first half of 2000 to discuss a draft law on reform of Ukraine's education system. Directors of secondary schools were invited to present testimony, which was used in further developing the draft law.
- In the first half of the year, aside from the above hearings, the Rada also held open hearings on pension reform; the new committee on humanitarian issues held a semi-public hearing with school system representatives to discuss a proposal to lower taxes on publication of school textbooks; the Rada held an open hearing on youth policy and nationality policy concerning the Crimean Tatars.

PERSONNEL

For the period of this workplan, Tom Cormier served as Kyiv office director and parliamentary trainer, supported by program assistants and translators Andriy Kononenko and Yuri Bessarab. Newly designated Civic Program Officer Joanne Pugh arrived in Kyiv in January, and long-serving Civic Program Officer Sarah Tweed departed NDI in March. The civic program was supported by program officer Olena Botsko, who assumed expanded responsibilities upon Sarah Tweed's departure. Tetiana Soboleva provided political analysis and served as program assistant for parliamentary programs. Kateryna Ryabiko served as political party program assistant.

During the first half of the year, NDI Kyiv operated without a full-time political party trainer. Since the beginning of June, however, NDI has hired Marcin Walecki of the Warsaw-based European Institute of Democracy as an interim full-time party trainer.